News Release

Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

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ADWS Announces Arkansas' First Information Technology Apprenticeship Program

LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, in partnership with the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coalition, launched Arkansas' first information technology apprenticeship program, which will teach computer coding and other technology-based skills.

The program, which is being funded through the Arkansas Sector Partnership grant recently awarded to ADWS by the U.S. Department of Labor, was created in response to a high employer demand for employees with advanced IT skills.

"Not only was this initiative created in response to the needs of employers, it is also being led by employers," said ADWS Director Daryl Bassett. "From the beginning, our employer partners have been involved in designing and financing the program to ensure that it meets their needs, and now that the program is being launched, these employers will be the primary source for training the apprentices."

According to Arkansas' 2015-2016 Hot 45 Demand Occupations, a recent publication produced by the Labor Market Information division of ADWS, Computer Systems Design and Related Services is one of the top 10 industries in Arkansas, and four of the top 45 demand occupations are within the IT field.

The IT apprenticeship program also is consistent with the strong commitment of Governor Asa Hutchinson and the Arkansas General Assembly to increase the state's IT educational opportunities, which has resulted in an initiative to ensure computer science courses are offered at all Arkansas public schools. The IT apprenticeship program builds on these expanded educational opportunities by also offering a postsecondary "earn and learn" pathway for individuals to pursue.

The AAC, which has 75 apprenticeship locations and works with more than 2,000 employers across the state, will serve 30 software architect apprentices over the two-year period of the grant. The program is targeted toward individuals interested in pursuing careers in IT, but eligibility preference will be given to dislocated workers.

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CEO of the National Apprenticeship Training Foundation Karen Breashears said, "We are pleased that ADWS is enabling us to offer apprenticeships in such a crucial field that will lead to high-paying jobs for our participants."

AAC is currently accepting applications for the Little Rock area. Individuals interested in enrolling in the IT apprenticeship program or other apprenticeship programs should contact Breashears at 870.246.0320 or Karen@NATF.US.

For more information about the Arkansas Sector Partnership grant, please contact Lisa Ferrell, ADWS discretionary grants coordinator, at 501.371.1024 or Lisa.Ferrell@arkansas.gov.

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